United Nations ST/SGB/1998/14

Secretariat

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# Secretary-General's Bulletin

## Organization of the Department of Political Affairs

The Secretary-General, pursuant to Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/5, entitled "Organization of the Secretariat of the United Nations", and for the purpose of establishing the organizational structure of the Department of Political Affairs, promulgates the following:

### Section 1. General provision

The present bulletin shall apply in conjunction with Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/5, entitled "Organization of the Secretariat of the United Nations".

### Section 2. Functions and organization

2.1 The Department of Political Affairs:

(a) Provides advice and support to the Secretary-General in the discharge of his global responsibilities related to the prevention, control and resolution of conflicts, including post-conflict peace-building, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and under the mandates given to him by the General Assembly and the Security Council. The Department is the focal point within the United Nations for post-conflict peace-building;

(b) Provides the Secretary-General with advice and support in the political aspects of his relations with Member States and other intergovernmental organizations, especially regional organizations with which the United Nations cooperates, including under Chapter VIII of the Charter, through the drafting of correspondence, the provision of briefing materials for his meetings with their representatives and taking the record of such meetings;

(c) Provides the Secretary-General with advice and support on electoral assistance matters and ensures appropriate consideration of and response to Member States' requests for such assistance. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs is the focal point for United Nations electoral assistance activities;

(d) Provides substantive support and secretariat services to the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies as well as to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People;

(e) Provides substantive support to the General Assembly and its relevant subsidiary organs, including the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Special Committee of 24).

2.2 The Department is divided into organizational units, as described in the present bulletin.

2.3 The Department is headed by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. The Under-Secretary-General and the officials in charge of each organizational unit, in addition to the specific functions set out in the present bulletin, perform the general functions applicable to their positions, as set out in Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/5.

### Section 3. Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs

3.1 The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs is accountable to the Secretary-General.

3.2 The Under-Secretary-General is responsible for all the activities of the Department of Political Affairs, as well as its administration; provides the Secretary-General with advice

and support on all political matters; provides political guidance and instructions to special envoys/representatives of the Secretary-General and other field representatives as appropriate; directs and manages, on behalf of the Secretary-General, goodwill, fact-finding and other special political missions; undertakes, on behalf of the Secretary-General, diplomatic activities relating to the prevention, control and resolution of disputes, including post-conflict peace-building; convenes and chairs the Executive Committee on Peace and Security; acts as the focal point in the Secretariat for all matters related to electoral assistance; and directs, through two Assistant Secretaries-General, the provision of substantive support and secretariat services to the Security Council and its subsidiary organs as well as to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the provision of substantive support to the General Assembly and its relevant subsidiary organs, including the Special Committee of 24.

**Section 4. Office of the Under-Secretary-General**

4.1 The Office of the Under-Secretary-General is headed by a Chief who is accountable to the Under-Secretary-General.

4.2 The core functions of the Office are as follows:

(a) Monitoring the implementation of the work plan of the Department;

(b) Advising the Under-Secretary-General on departmental policies and guidelines and dealing with specific policy and management issues/problems;

(c) Preparing reports and notes on political and managerial issues for consideration by the Under-Secretary-General;

(d) Acting as a focal point for information on all aspects of the work of the Department;

(e) Coordinating interdepartmental activities and undertaking the necessary follow-up;

(f) Consulting, negotiating and coordinating with other departments, offices, funds and programmes on matters of mutual concern;

(g) Representing or arranging for representation of the Department at appropriate meetings;

(h) Overseeing the activities of the Executive Office and of the various departmental teams or working groups established under the authority of the Under-Secretary-General.

**Section 5. Assistant Secretaries-General**

The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, in the performance of his activities, is assisted by two Assistant Secretaries-General supervising work related to the prevention, control and resolution of conflicts, including post-conflict peace-building, and to decolonization and the question of Palestine, as well as to the Security Council and its subsidiary organs. The Assistant Secretaries-General are accountable to the Under-Secretary-General.

**Section 6. Regional divisions**

6.1 There are four regional divisions: two for Africa, one for Asia and one for the Americas and Europe. Each regional division is headed by a Director who is accountable to the Under-Secretary-General through one of the Assistant Secretaries-General.

6.2 The core functions of the divisions are as follows:

(a) Identifying potential crisis areas and provides early warning to the Secretary-General on developments and situations affecting international peace and security;

(b) Planning and participating in fact-finding, peacemaking and other missions to areas of actual or potential conflicts where the Secretary-General's preventive and peacemaking efforts may be needed or are already engaged;

(c) Providing political guidance and support to special representatives and other senior officials appointed by the Secretary-General to assist in his efforts in the fields of preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. In the case of peacekeeping operations, such guidance and support will be provided through the Department of Peacekeeping Operations;

(d) Advising the Secretary-General in giving overall political direction to post-conflict peace-building efforts and, to that end, providing guidance to United Nations programmes, funds and agencies;

(e) Preparing for the Secretary-General and his senior officials analytical briefs and in-depth studies, focused on emerging trends bearing on peace and security, with advice and/or recommendations, where appropriate, for possible action by the Organization;

(f) Contributing to activities of the United Nations system on issues of governance and democratization;

(g) Preparing briefing notes, background papers and talking points for the Secretary-General's meetings with representatives of Member States;

(h) Providing, in coordination with the Decolonization Unit, substantive support to the General

Assembly, the Trusteeship Council and subsidiary organs of the General Asser ' ', including the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) and the Special Committee of 24;

(i) Preparing reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly and the Security Council;

(j) Maintaining and developing cooperation with the secretariats of regional organizations and arrangements through joint meetings, consultations, liaison and attendance at meetings held by them;

(k) Liaising, consulting and negotiating with Member States at Headquarters or in their capitals;

(l) Maintaining and expanding links with other United Nations departments and offices and other relevant institutes and experts;

(m) Maintaining contacts with non-governmental organizations and academic institutions worldwide and participating in seminars and academic meetings relating to the mandate of the Department.

**Section 7. Electoral Assistance Division**

7.1 The Electoral Assistance Division is headed by a Director who is accountable to the Under-Secretary-General.

7.2 The core functions of the Division are as follows:

(a) Advising and assisting the Under-Secretary-General in his capacity as the focal point for United Nations electoral assistance activities;

(b) Reviewing requests for electoral assistance programmes and advising on their implementation;

(c) Coordinating and channelling to the appropriate agencies requests from Member States for electoral assistance;

(d) Coordinating and providing support to the activities of other international observers;

(e) Undertaking needs-assessment missions to determine the specific needs of a country requesting such assistance;

(f) Establishing an institutional memory to ensure consistency in the assistance rendered to Member States organizing elections;

(g) Developing and maintaining a roster of international experts who could provide technical assistance, as well as assistance in the verification of electoral processes;

(h) Maintaining contact with regional and other intergovernmental organizations to ensure appropriate working arrangements with them;

(i) Developing regional networks of electoral organizations as instruments for coordination of activities and for exchange of expertise at the regional level;

(j) Preparing the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the activities of the United Nations to enhance the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections.

**Section 8. Security Council Affairs Division**

8.1 The Security Council Affairs Division is headed by a Director who is accountable to the Under-Secretary-General through one of the Assistant Secretaries-General.

8.2 The Division consists of four organizational units, namely, the Security Council Secretariat Branch, the Security Council Subsidiary Organs Branch, the Security Council Practices and Charter Research Branch and the Military Staff Committee Secretariat. Each branch is headed by a Chief who is accountable to the Director.

8.3 The core functions of the Security Council Secretariat Branch are as follows:

(a) Providing substantive support and secretariat services to the work of the Council, including formal meetings, the standing subsidiary organs of the Council dealing with matters of procedure, informal consultations and informal working groups;

(b) Maintaining necessary liaison with the members and non-members of the Council and other departments and offices in the Secretariat, as well as with organs and organizations of the United Nations system;

(c) Preparing the daily summaries of the Council's activities for the Secretary-General;

(d) Preparing the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly;

(e) Processing and issuing the Secretary-General's reports and communications received from the Secretary-General and Member and non-member States as Council documents;

(f) Handling and periodically issuing a list of official correspondence and communications received from non-governmental organizations and individuals relating to matters of which the Security Council is seized and in accordance with the appendix to the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council.

8.4 The core functions of the Security Council Subsidiary Organs Branch are as follows:

(a) Providing substantive support and secretariat services to the subsidiary organs of the Security Council, including the Sanctions Committees;

(b) Drafting reports of subsidiary organs to the Security Council as required;

(c) Preparing analyses and assessments of questions relating to the work of the Security Council or the subsidiary organs as requested;

(d) Monitoring developments in the area of sanctions, including those relating to Article 50 of the Charter;

(e) Maintaining liaison with delegations and with other organizations of the United Nations system;

(f) Providing contributions to other departments and offices on issues related to the work of relevant subsidiary organs of the Security Council;

(g) Processing communications and applications received from States and organizations in connection with matters falling within the purview of the subsidiary organ concerned;

(h) Preparing studies on relevant articles of the Charter for the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs*.

8.5 The core functions of the Security Council Practices and Charter Research Branch are as follows:

(a) Preparing analytical studies on the interpretation and application of the Charter of the United Nations and the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council;

(b) Preparing the *Répertoire of the Practice of the Security Council*;

(c) Cooperating with the Office of Legal Affairs regarding the publication of the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs* and contributing studies on the articles thereto relative to international peace and security;

(d) Undertaking studies on the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council for the President and members of the Council, as well as for the Secretariat, as required.

8.6 The core functions of the Military Staff Committee Secretariat are as follows:

(a) Providing secretariat support and advice to the Military Staff Committee in the preparation for, conduct of and action arising from the Committee's meetings;

(b) Preparing studies on relevant articles of the Charter for the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs*.

**Section 9. Decolonization Unit**

9.1 The Decolonization Unit is headed by a Chief who is accountable to the Under-Secretary-General through one of the Assistant Secretaries-General.

9.2 The core functions of the Decolonization Unit are as follows:

(a) Providing substantive support to the Special Committee of 24 and its visiting and other missions, as well as to the General Assembly, when they review issues relating to decolonization;

(b) Undertaking research and analytical studies and reporting on conditions in the 17 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories;

(c) Providing assistance to the Special Committee in the preparation of its reports to the General Assembly;

(d) Collecting, reviewing and disseminating basic materials, studies and articles relating to decolonization;

(e) Promoting, in cooperation with the Department of Public Information, a publicity campaign on decolonization;

(f) Promoting flows of assistance from specialized agencies and institutions associated with the United Nations to the people in the Non-Self-Governing Territories;

(g) Providing the required substantive services to the Trusteeship Council and assisting in preparing the reports of the Trusteeship Council if it should meet, in accordance with its rules of procedure;

(h) Preparing studies on relevant articles of the Charter for the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs*.

**Section 10. Division for Palestinian Rights**

10.1 The Division for Palestinian Rights is headed by a Chief who is accountable to the Under-Secretary-General through one of the Assistant Secretaries-General.

10.2 The core functions of the Division for Palestinian Rights are as follows:

(a) Providing substantive support and secretariat services for the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, its Working Group and its Bureau;

(b) Assisting the Committee in the exercise of its mandate and the promotion and implementation of its recommendations;

(c) Planning, organizing and servicing the Committee's programme of regional seminars, symposia and international meetings of non-governmental organizations, as well as consulting and maintaining liaison with such organizations active on the issue;

(d) Organizing the annual commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(e) Preparing studies and publications relating to the question of Palestine and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people;

(f) Promoting publicity for such studies and publications, in cooperation with the Department of Public Information;

(g) Establishing and continuing to develop a computer-based information system on the question of Palestine (UNISPAL).

**Section 11. Executive Office**

11.1 The Executive Office is headed by an Executive Officer who is accountable to the Under-Secretary-General through the Chief of the Office of the Under-Secretary-General.

11.2 The core functions of the Office are set out in section 7 of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/5.

**Section 12. Final provisions**

12.1 The present bulletin shall enter into force on 1 September 1998.

12.2 Secretary-General's bulletin of 15 September 1997, entitled "Organization of the Department of Political Affairs" (ST/SGB/1997/7), is hereby abolished.

*(Signed)* Kofi A. **Annan**
Secretary-General